

Read

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17,
22-23

Colossians 3:1-4 or
1 Corinthians 5:6b-8

John 20:1-9 or
Luke 24:13-35

Easter Sunday: The Resurrection of the Lord

April 17, 2022

REFLECTION

(The Gospel reading this reflection is based on is John 20:1-9.)

Imagine the memories haunting Mary Magdalene when she went to the tomb. She just lived Good Friday, a day of immense grief and loss as she wept goodbye to her dear friend, Jesus. Mary stood with Jesus through every agonizing moment of his suffering and death on the cross. Now she's searching for the body of Jesus. "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him" (John 20:2), Mary laments to the disciples. Where could Jesus be?

We know how the story ends: Jesus rises from the dead. He appears to Mary and directs her to go out to tell the Good News. But we don't hear that part of the story today. The Easter Sunday Gospel is full of fear and confusion. In many ways, Mary meets us where we are in today's Gospel. How often do we not understand? Aren't there times in all our lives when we feel scared and unsure?

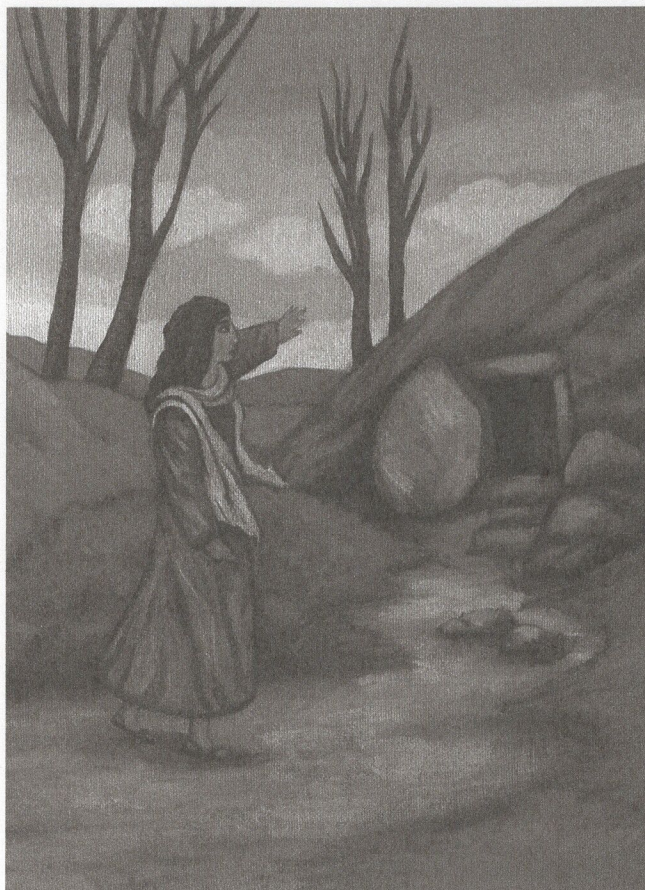
The Easter story is ultimately one of joy—and not cheap joy, either. Jesus rises after a painful death so that we may one day rise in glory, too. All fear and confusion will be wiped away. Only love will remain.

QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What is your favorite part of the Easter celebration?
- ❖ Where are you, like Mary, searching for the risen Christ?

ACTION

Jesus Christ has risen today—alleluia! On this highest Easter feast, celebrate fully with the church and your community. Attend Easter Sunday Mass and soak in the sights and sounds: trumpets blasting, water rushing through the baptismal font, incense wafting through the sanctuary, the light of the Easter candle flickering, and the chatter of an assembly ready to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior.



Introduction to **EASTER TIME**



The Season

Alleluia! Christ is risen! The season of Easter Time is a fifty-day celebration that Christ has conquered death and reigns with the Father for eternity. Through his passion, death, and resurrection, we are immersed into Christ's paschal mystery. We gaze again upon the face of love poured out, sacrificed for us and for all, the face of God that we see through Christ's life and love. We are taught yet again that this loving way is to be our way, the Way.

The Easter Gospel accounts bring us face to face with the mystery of Christ's resurrection, so that we, with the disciples, may move from unbelief to belief, declare our love of Christ, and recommit ourselves to sharing this love in our world.

If we have kept Lent well, Easter Time will help us solidify our commitment to Christ in our daily living. If we slipped during Lent, letting go of resolutions and falling into less-than-Christlike patterns of behavior, this season may be one of new opportunity to live in the hope and joy of the resurrection. Through Christ, we no longer need to despair. We have everything we need to overcome the temptations and challenges of life. By the end of the season, we will be reminded that we are promised the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, who will guide us and remind us of all we have learned from our Lord.

There is no doubt that we need Easter's joy, hope, and love. There is much in our lives as individuals and in the world that speaks more of death and darkness than of life and light. It is essential,

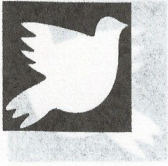
then, that we linger in Easter Time, for its full fifty days, and carry it as witnesses into our lives. Christ's risen life has the power to change the world; we must carry this life through our daily living, as Easter people, now and forever.

Celebrating Easter Time with Teens

While Lent has a particular sort of appeal for teens who are developmentally moving from concrete to abstract thinking, Easter Time may be a challenge, particularly for younger teens. The resounding themes of love and the assurance of the Holy Spirit provide the concrete direction needed for younger teens, while the mystery of Christ's resurrection and ascension, and the descent of the Holy Spirit may be more appealing to older youth. Bring the season to life in your reflections by sharing your own examples of Christian life and love, inviting the teens to do the same for one another.

Preparing the Liturgical Environment

The white of Easter Time is bright after the long Lenten bareness and penitential violet. Add an Easter lily, baptismal candle, and green plants to your environment to reinforce the focus of the season on the newness of life, which we gain through Christ's resurrection. Include a Bible or lectionary, open to the Easter narrative, and a strip of cloth or paper on which is written, "Alleluia!"



April 17, 2022

EASTER SUNDAY: THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

LECTIONARY #42ABC

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Psalms 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8

Sequence: *Victimae paschali laudes*

John 20:1-9 or Luke 24:1-12 or Luke 24:13-35

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

Easter is the highest celebration of the Church's liturgical year. On Easter we see the story between God and his people shining with the greatest love that can ever be offered. We see the love of the Father who didn't spare his only son, and we see the love of the Son who willingly offered his life for the salvation of his people. On Easter we see the result of that sacrificial love that redeemed all humanity—we hear the empty tomb proclaimed. That empty tomb is our first glimpse of death defeated, evil bound and overcome, and the gift of redemption freely given to us. We celebrate the resurrection each Sunday, but we especially glory in God's great love for us, first seen in the empty tomb, on this very joyful day.

Q FOCUS: *Jesus has victory over death, and we first see that victory in the empty tomb.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

The Easter season is a glorious celebration that lasts through June 5 this year, when it concludes with Pentecost. The seven Sundays of Easter will feature gold and white colors, and plenty of flowers to signify new life. During this season we will also celebrate the ascension of the Lord. Our Gospel readings will be primarily from the Gospel according to John, which is rich in high Christological language. This

means that the readings will focus on revealing aspects of Christ's divinity. The date of Easter is different from year to year because the date is determined by a lunar reckoning. Easter always falls after March 21 (the spring equinox), and it is the first Sunday after the full moon after this date.

Church Teaching Connection

Our belief in the resurrection doesn't end with Jesus' resurrection. In the Nicene Creed we state our belief in the resurrection of those who have died while living in the faith of Christ. After the first sin in the Garden of Eden, all people would have to suffer death. Jesus, through his life, death, and resurrection, has saved us from the fate of death. Even though we die at the end of our earthly life, death has no power over us. Through Christ we can gain heaven, and we are also promised the resurrection of our own bodies when Christ comes again at the end of time.

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

John 20:1-9

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So

she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him." So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in. When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

Jesus was not in the tomb. Jesus' apostles and followers had seen their beloved teacher arrested, tortured, executed, mutilated, and buried. They knew that he was dead, and they knew that their years of discipleship had abruptly halted. Jesus' tomb—a place of hard rock and cool earth—now housed his body, they believed.

Mary Magdalene went to care for her dear rabbi's body; such work was reserved for women, according to Jewish law. When she found the tomb empty, she hurried to inform the others. Nobody knew yet exactly what had happened. In this reading we hear about the empty tomb; we do not hear yet that Jesus rose from the dead.

► **Why do you think we only hear about the empty tomb? What did it mean to disciples at that time? What does it mean to us now?**

Jesus told the disciples that he would rise again from the dead; he made reference to tearing down the temple and restoring it after three days. He made reference to the Son of Man rising after three days. Still, when the tomb was empty, we hear in today's Gospel that Jesus' followers believed, but that they didn't understand exactly what took place on that miraculous Sunday.

As we hear today's reading proclaimed, we listen with the knowledge of Christ's Church two thousand years after the fact—we hear this reading knowing that the empty tomb means Jesus is alive, and that he had risen from the dead. We hear the reading knowing the sheer joy and awe of what this empty tomb means to God's people. This empty tomb is evidence of our Lord's battle and victory against sin and death. The empty tomb is the first glimpse of the realization of God's plan for our reconciliation with him. When we hear about the empty tomb, we hear about the tremendous love that God has for us, and we realize that he held back nothing for the good of his children.

► **What are some Christian symbols that might seem bleak to someone, but are reminders to the faithful of God's love? [Some of these might include the cross, the empty tomb, the Eucharist (Christ's Body for us), etc.]**

Easter Sunday is the highest day of the Church's liturgical year, and it is a glorious celebration of the greatest love story ever known—it is the story of love between God and his people. It's the story of love between Christ and his Church. It's the story that gives us the ability to love one another, and it teaches us the measure of God's love—total, complete, and redeeming love.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 168.

Easter is the highest celebration of the liturgical year.

The empty tomb is the sign of Christ's resurrection.

Jesus is alive, and his love gives us life.

Act on the Word

Singing Our Belief

For this activity, you will need to borrow enough hymnals from your parish that the young people can use them in this reflection activity. You will also need pens and paper.

Since the early days of our faith tradition, the Church has recognized an important relationship between the way we pray and what we believe. This relationship is referred to by the Latin phrase *lex orandi, lex credendi* meaning that the law of prayer (*orandi*) is the foundation for the law of belief (*credendi*). The reverse is also true. Our rituals and prayers inform our belief, and our belief helps to structure our rituals and prayers. The songs we sing at Mass are prayers, and those songs are a reflection of our beliefs.

Divide the teens into small groups and distribute the hymnals, paper, and pens. Using the headings or the index in the hymnal, have the young people find favorite Easter songs. Have each group pick one or two songs to reflect on. Use the following questions to help the teens reflect on the meaning of these songs and the way they articulate our beliefs.

- ✳ What does this song teach us about Jesus' resurrection?
- ✳ How does this song help us understand Jesus' earthly mission?
- ✳ When we sing this song, how do we more deeply understand Jesus?

- ✳ What does this song teach us about ourselves and our relationship with God?

After the groups have reflected upon these questions, begin a large group discussion about music and how it impacts our beliefs and our faith. Discuss liturgical music and popular music, and consider the way it affects the human person. Some discussion topics might include:

- ✳ What sort of songs become "stuck" in your head? What affect does it have on your life?
- ✳ When we sing lyrics, how does it affect our thinking and beliefs?
- ✳ Repeating words and sentences can introduce us to different ideas. What ideas do you want in your mind?
- ✳ What are the favorite liturgical hymns in the group?
- ✳ What popular music is appreciated by the group?

Closing Prayer

*Ever-loving God,
by raising Jesus Christ from the dead
you destroyed the bonds of sin and death forever.
Fill us with the joy of the resurrection
and empower us to be eager witnesses to
its power in our lives.*

*We ask this through Jesus Christ, our
resurrection and our life,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity
of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.*

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.